

10
16 (Amended) The cleaning device of claim 13, wherein said valve further includes a bias spring disposed between said valve stem and said base wall and resiliently urging said valve to its closed position.

REMARKS

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action dated November 18, 1999. Filed herewith is a Request for One-Month Extension of Time. Reconsideration of the rejected claims in view of this Amendment is respectfully asked.

Claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as being indefinite in that "said base" lacks proper antecedent basis. The language has been change to "said base wall," in accordance with the examiner's suggestion. The new language is believed to be clear and definite.

Claims 1-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 or 103 as being anticipated by or unpatentable over U.S. patent no. 4,955,746 to Craigmile. Claims 1-17 are also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Craigmile in view of one or more of U.S. patent nos. 2,952,026 to LaPland, 2,157,778 to Tourot or 1,939,515 to Olson. In support of the rejection, the examiner contends that Craigmile discloses all of the subject matter recited in the independent claims 1 and 10, with the possible exception of a seal covering the cap. The examiner contends that the latter feature is taught by LaPland and that it would have been obvious in view of LaPland to incorporate it in the Craigmile device.

The present invention differs fundamentally from Craigmile in that it requires "an

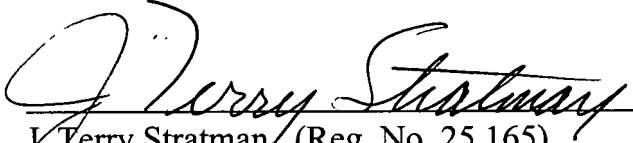
open-top housing” and a cap which is “for closing” the open-top of the housing. In the Craigmile device, on the other hand, the housing 14 is closed at the top by a top wall 28 which has only a relatively small central aperture therein closed by the cap 30. In order more clearly to bring out this aspect of the invention, independent claims 1 and 10 have been amended to specify that the cap is “forming a top wall of the housing.” Craigmile does not disclose a flexible and resilient seal member which covers a cap which forms a top wall of the housing.

The examiner contends that LaPland teaches a flexible and resilient seal which surrounds an opening and extends over the upstanding walls thereof to engage the housing and suggests and it would have been obvious in view of LaPland to dispose the Craigmile flexible and resilient seal 42 around the outside of the cap rather than on the inside of it. Assuming, *arguendo*, that this were true, it would still not result in the invention as recited in the amended claims, i.e., wherein the seal covers a cap which forms “a top wall of the housing.” Indeed, LaPland actually teaches away from such an arrangement. LaPland does have a cap 15 forming a top wall of the housing 10, and yet its flexible and resilient seal 21 clearly does not cover that cap. For these reasons it is submitted that, as amended, claims 1 and 10 and the claims dependent thereon are clearly patentable over the cited art.

This conclusion is not affected by Tourolet or Olson, neither of which discloses a cap forming a top wall of an open-top housing and covered by a flexible and resilient seal.

An earnest effort having been made to answer the examiner's rejections, it is submitted that, as amended, each of the remaining claims 1-17 is now in condition for allowance and the allowance thereof is respectfully asked.

Respectfully submitted,



J. Terry Stratman (Reg. No. 25,165)
Harold V. Stotland (Reg. No. 24,492)